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CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF TORONTO,

AT THE VISITATION,

ON

TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 1860,

BY

JOHN, LORD BISHOP OF TORONTO.

[Strachan, John]

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A CHARGE, &c.

MY DEAR BRETHREN,

According to my usual practice, it was my intention to have addressed you last year on the state and expectations of our beloved Church, but many circumstances pleaded for a postponement, among others, a series of domestic afflictions, which bore too heavily upon me at the time to allow of such an exertion. While such severe visitations warn me of the near approach of my own departure, they likewise remind me, that in bidding farewell to this world, we are not passing to a land of strangers, but to meet affectionate parents, children, brothers, and sisters, and all whom we have loved and mourned, ready to welcome us to the glory and felicity of an everlasting home. But another year has elapsed, and I feel it my duty to make no longer delay in calling you together. Three years, the usual period between Episcopal visitations, is too long in my advanced age to anticipate with any confidence the privilege and enjoyment of another meeting. Not that I would be understood as using the language of complaint ; on the contrary, I have much for which to be thankful to my Lord and Master, who has been infinitely kinder to me than I have deserved, and has been from my birth to this day my constant

shepherd and preserver. If, therefore, I bring these things to remembrance, I do so in the way of apology, that I may be permitted to speak to you on this occasion rather in the way of reminiscence and confession than upon matters more elaborate, though perhaps no less interesting. My life has doubtless been laborious, and, I believe, interspread by a larger number of vicissitudes than usually happen to individuals; but it has on the whole been happy, and now, when near the close, I can look back without any startling convictions, and forward with increasing hope. When public bodies meet after some years separation we find that events have happened in the interval which throw a melancholy sadness over our friendly salutations. We look in vain for some beloved faces, and listen in vain for those pleasant voices which on former occasions used to warm our hearts with tenderness and affection. One generation passeth away and another cometh, and we are cut down as the flower of the grass, and never continue in one stay. Since we last met two of our brethren have been called home. First, the Reverend Francis Evans, Rector of Woodhouse, D.C.L., of Trinity College, and a Presbyterian of thirty-two years standing. He was well known and esteemed among us as a faithful and indefatigable Missionary—frank, and obliging in his manners, and kind and hospitable to his brethren, and his death has been deeply regretted by all who knew him. In the division of the Diocese of Toronto he fell to Huron, but only as it were for a moment. I justly considered him one of the most

deserving and approved of my Clergy, and held him in high estimation as a faithful servant in the Lord's vineyard. He was in truth literally worn out in the Missionary service, and may be said to have died in harness. From the largeness of his family and limited income, he had many anxious cares and difficulties to bear and contend with, but he was always content and cheerful, and never found wanting where duty called. His family was a model of meekness and frugality ; and what is still better, of unity and affection. It was a pleasure to witness the harmony and contentment that dwelt in his domestic circle, and which were in a great degree the fruits of the good example which he set before it, and which was carried out in the whole of his moral and religious conduct.

To many, a large number of children with straitened means becomes a very serious trial ; but to our departed brother, and his excellent wife, whose merits were equal to his own, it was evidently a blessing. Finding his health getting much impaired and very delicate, he listened, after much reluctance, to the advice of his medical adviser, who assured him that the only effective means of regaining his former health was a visit to Ireland, his native land : that this would unite the benefits of a long sea voyage, an entire cessation from the cares and anxieties of a large parish, and bring back many of the invigorating and endearing associations of early life ; from all which he might anticipate a happy return to his friends and parishioners. He departed, with his affectionate wife, in something of this hope, for he

was of a sanguine and happy disposition; but it was otherwise appointed; and just as he reached his brother's house in Ireland, God declared that his work was finished, by taking him to Himself. "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write, from henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours: and their labours do follow them."

The circumstances which attended the removal of the Reverend Dominic E. Blake, A. M., to a better world, were so awfully painful and unexpected, as to call forth a general expression of deep sympathy and grief. It is not, indeed, often that the decease of an individual produces such an affectionate manifestation of tender feeling and respect. I transcribe the notice of my friend's death, which was inserted in the *Canadian Ecclesiastical Gazette*, of the first of July, 1859, because I can personally testify that it is correctly and admirably drawn up:

"Our readers will probably have heard of the melancholy loss which the Church of England and society at large have sustained by the sudden decease of this truly estimable man. The circumstances attending his removal were, however, so painful and impressive, as to require more than the accustomed notice. Mr. Blake had come to Toronto, on Wednesday last, the 29th of June, St. Peter's day, in order to attend the annual dinner in the hall of Trinity College. He appeared to be in his ordinary health, and to enter with much quiet enjoyment into the proceedings of the evening. Towards their close, he was called upon to respond to a toast pro-

posed by the Vice Chancellor of the University, 'our Visitors;' and in doing so, he expressed with great feeling the gratification which he had experienced by the revival, in the college hall, of old associations,—speaking of the evening as the happiest which he had spent for many years. In concluding his address, which indicated throughout the calm and cheerful exercise of his faculties, he sat, but for a moment, and then withdrew from the room. He was followed immediately by Lewis Moffatt, Esq., and Charles Magrath, Esq., who very shortly summoned Dr. Bovell. His complaint was a violent cramp in the stomach, which was rapidly succeeded by paralysis of the lower extremities, and great pain along the spine. He was removed to a bed, and within a few minutes after reaching it, calmly breathed his last, during the offering of the commendatory prayer.

"It matters little at what hour of the day the righteous falls asleep, death cannot come to him unwelcome."

But every spectator of that mournful and awful scene must long remember how impressive a lesson it conveyed of the instability of human life, and of the vanity of even the most innocent of earthly enjoyments. The Reverend D. E. Blake was intimately known to me, and the more I knew him the more I estimated him as a friend and brother. And I trust that the recollection of his Christian graces and valuable services, while they deepen the sense of our loss, will induce us to follow with ardour his example. So that we in our turn may excite among

those who survive us, in an equal degree, that faith and love of Christ with which I believe him to have been so eminently imbued.

On Tuesday, the second day of August, I commenced my Confirmation journey through that portion of the Diocese which is comprehended between Kingston and the province line. On this duty I was employed thirty days. I confirmed at 44 churches, preaching alternately with my Chaplain, and always addressing the Candidates at the conclusion of the service. The style and appointments of the churches were better than formerly, and the new ones erected with improved taste. The country in general was more extensively cultivated, and more especially around and in the neighbourhood of the City of Ottawa, which promises soon to be a place of magnitude and importance. The Candidates confirmed numbered 1670. The miles travelled 1119, of which by rail 300, and by coach 819.

Although I have often called your attention to the subject of confirmation, and to the beauty and usefulness of an office which has ever been regarded by the Church as an Apostolic rite employed by her first rulers under immediate inspiration from above, as a special means and instrument of communicating to the children of the Faithful the gift of the Holy Spirit, yet I cannot forbear to remind you once more on this occasion, that it is likewise the harvest of the parish, and that we have just reason to expect in the proper use of a precious blessing different from that which would attend any other becoming ceremony by which our youth might renew their vows, and dedicate themselves to the service of God. For

although miraculous powers no longer exhibit themselves to the bodily eye, as in the acts of the Apostles, yet in all other respects the agency of the Holy Spirit as to the blessing communicated is in no way different from that which was imparted by prayer and imposition of the hands of St. Peter and St. John, and which has been the practice and belief of the Church for 1700 years. Hence, confirmation is not merely a duty, but a privilege, and therefore children should be brought forward as soon as they can understand its value and object; and it should also be followed soon after by bringing the confirmed to the Holy Communion, that we may induce them to become regular communicants, and this before their conscience can reproach them with any gross or flagrant sins. Hence they will be brought to feel and to acknowledge that they stand in need of a Saviour. We surely may hope that some of them will continue the practice through life. If Christian parents would only seriously consider what pleasing results would follow the bringing up their children under the religious impressions that confirmation, when joined at an early age with the first communion, would naturally produce, they would never neglect this important part of their duty. How would they rejoice, and have cause to rejoice, when they beheld the elder brothers and sisters of the family after confirmation pressing forward in humble resolve, and joining with their parents in encouraging the younger branches, and thus insure the future peace and happiness of the whole household.

It is, my brethren, generally known that in emi-

grating to this county I had a different object in view than that of entering the Church, but a wise and kind Providence ordered otherwise.

In 1796, having finished my terms at King's College, Aberdeen, and proceeded to the Master's degree, I removed to the vicinity of St. Andrew's, and while there I contracted several important and lasting friendships, amongst others, with Thomas Duncan, afterwards Professor of Mathematics, and also with Dr. Chalmers, since then so deservedly renowned. We were all three very nearly of the same age, and our friendship only terminated with death, being kept alive by a constant correspondence during more than sixty years. After leaving Saint Andrew's I was for a time employed in private tuition, but having a mother and two sisters in a great degree dependent on my exertion, I applied for the Parochial school of Kettle, in the county of Fife, and obtained it by public competition. And here, at the age of nineteen, I made my first essay in the great field of educational labour, commencing my career with a deeply rooted love for the cause, and with something of a fore-knowledge of that success which has since crowned my efforts. It was my practice to study and note the character and capacity of my pupils as they entered the school, and to this discrimination which gave correctness to my judgment many owe the success which they ultimately achieved. Among my pupils at that time was Sir David Wilkie, since so well known as one of the first painters of the age. I very soon perceived Wilkie's great genius, and with much diffi-

culty prevailed with his uncle to send him, still very young, to the celebrated Raeburn, then enjoying the highest reputation in Scotland. It is pleasing to remark, that after an interval of perhaps thirty years, the preceptor and scholar met in London, and renewed an intimacy so profitable to one and so honourable to both. They attended the meeting of the British Association at Birmingham together, and saw much of one another during my short stay in England. Often did Sir David Wilkie, at the height of his fame, declare that he owed every thing to his Reverend teacher, and that but for his interference he must have remained in obscurity. Commodore Robert Barclay, afterwards so unfortunate on Lake Erie, from causes over which he had no control, was another of my pupils. He was a youth of the brightest promise, and often have I said in my heart that he possessed qualities which fitted him to be another Nelson had the way opened for such a consummation. While at Saint Andrew's the Reverend James Brown, one of the acting Professors of the University, a gentleman of vast scientific attainments, became so exceedingly attached to me as to take me under his kind protection. After some time he was advanced to the chair of Natural Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, to which place he removed. Still interested in my welfare, he proposed to me to become his attending assistant, to prepare and make the experiments necessary for the illustration of his lectures, and in his absence from infirm health, which was not unfrequent, to read his prelections, and discharge such of his duties

in the lecture room as I was qualified to undertake. But difficulties intervened to prevent this arrangement from being carried out when almost completed, and Dr. Brown was, as he intimated to me, reluctantly induced to retire on a pension. But our mutual attachment continued through life. This to me was a very bitter disappointment. A career of honourable usefulness had been opened in a way after my own heart, and it was in a moment destroyed. But I was not overwhelmed, for God had in his goodness given me a cheerful spirit of endurance, and a sanguine disposition as to the future, which it was not easy to depress, and a kind Providence, even before I had altogether recovered the shock, presented to me an opportunity of removing to another sphere of activity, and in the frame of mind in which I found myself, I was the more disposed to accept employment in Canada.

Among the many schemes contemplated by General Simcoe, for the benefit of the province, was that of establishing Grammar Schools in every district, and a University at their head, at the seat of government. Anxious to complete, as soon as possible, so beneficial an object, the Governor gave authority to the late Honourable Richard Cartwright and the Honourable Robert Hamilton, to procure a gentleman from Scotland, to organise and take charge of such College or University. These gentlemen, whose memories are still dear to the province, applied to their friends in St. Andrew's, who offered the appointment first to Mr. Duncan, then to Mr. Chalmers, neither of whom were yet much known, but

both declined. Overtures were then made to me, and, suffering severely under my recent disappointment, I was induced, after some hesitation, to accept the appointment.

I sailed from Greenock towards the end of August, 1799, under convoy; but such was then the wretched state of navigation, that I did not reach Kingston, by the way of New York and Montreal, till the last day of the year 1799, much fatigued in body, and not a little disappointed at the desolate appearance of the country, being, throughout, one sheet of snow. But a new and still more severe trial awaited me. I was informed that Governor Simcoe had some time before returned to England, but of which I had received no information, and that the intention of establishing the projected university had been postponed. I was deeply moved and cast down, and had I possessed the means, I would have instantly returned to Scotland. A more lonely or destitute condition can scarcely be conceived. My reasonable expectations were cruelly blighted—a lonely stranger in a foreign land, without any resources or a single acquaintance. But, my return was next to impossible, and it was more wisely ordered. Mr. Cartwright, to whom I had been specially recommended, came to my assistance, and sympathised deeply and sincerely in this to me unexpected calamity, and after a short space of time, proposed a temporary remedy. My case, he acknowledged, was most trying, but not altogether hopeless, and he submitted an arrangement which might be deemed only temporary, or lasting, as future events

should direct. Take charge, said he, of my four sons and a select number of pupils, during three years ; this will provide you with honourable employment and a fair remuneration, and if, at the expiration of that period the country does not present a reasonable prospect of advancement, you might return to Scotland with credit. He further added that he did not think the plan of the Grammar Schools and University altogether desperate, although it might take longer time to establish them than might be convenient or agreeable. In my position there was no alternative but to acquiesce, and I was soon enabled to return to a healthy cheerfulness, and to meet my difficulties with fortitude and resignation. In the meantime a strong attachment grew up between me and Mr. Cartwright, whom I found to be a man of great capacity and intelligence, of the strictest honour and integrity, and moreover, a sincere Churchman from conviction, after deep enquiry and research. A similarity of feelings and tastes tended to strengthen and confirm our mutual regard, which at length ripened into a warm friendship, which continued without the slightest change or abatement till we were separated by death. I was left the guardian of his children, the highest and most precious proof of confidence that he could have conferred upon me, and I feel happy in saying that under my guardianship they became worthy of their excellent father. At Kingston, I formed other friendships, especially with the Rev. Dr. Stuart, the rector of the parish, and the Bishop's Commissary for Upper Canada ; a gentleman whose

sound judgment, sagacity, and other high mental qualities were rendered more useful and attractive by his kind and courteous demeanour, and a playful wit which seemed inexhaustible. From this gentleman I received the most affectionate and parental attention and advice from the day of our first interview, and our friendly intercourse continued ever after without interruption. At Dr. Stuart's suggestion, I devoted all my leisure time during the three years of my engagement with Mr. Cartwright, to the study of Divinity, with a view of entering the Church at its expiration. Accordingly, on the second day of May, 1803, I was ordained Deacon, by the Right Reverend Dr. Mountain, the first Protestant Bishop of Quebec; and on the third day of June, 1804, I was admitted by the same Prelate into the Holy order of Priests, and appointed to the mission of Cornwall. On entering upon the discharge of the duties of my ministry, I adopted the rule enjoined on Timothy by St. Paul, to avoid needless discussions on religious subjects, and never to forget that I was sent to proclaim and to teach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Therefore, when any came who manifested a sincere desire to know the truth, it was my duty, as it was my joy to encourage and assist them in their enquiries: but if they came merely to dispute and wrangle for the sake of victory, I refused to indulge them. By such a course, I gradually acquired authority, and, notwithstanding my youth and inexperience, I was able to repress superciliousness and to expose ignorance. In the meantime, my walk

and conversation and friendly bearing to all around me, increased my influence not only with the young but with the elderly part of the congregation. Moreover, I endeavoured to be on all occasions prepared to give an answer with reverence to every one of my parishioners who asked me for a reason of the hope that was in me. With this view, I made the study of the Holy Scriptures, from which all the formularies of our Church are drawn, my daily practice ; and after no little enquiry, found her Book of Common Prayer, her Creeds, her Thirty-nine Articles, her ministration of the Holy Sacraments, and her other minor offices in marvellous harmony one with the other. This conviction set my mind at rest, and enabled me at all times to speak with the boldness of conviction in favour of our beloved Church, and with an inward satisfaction and firmness of purpose which under the Divine blessing has never changed. Notwithstanding my careful preparation, and my knowledge from personal intercourse that my people were kindly disposed towards me, I felt exceedingly agitated on preaching my first sermon. Looking at my audience, I was deeply struck with my own weak and slender attainments, and the awful responsibility I had assumed, and from which there could be no retreat. I was now, in the providence of God, occupying a station, if faithfully employed, of great social and religious influence, and of vast consequence both to myself and my people ; and if it should happen the same congregation, or any member thereof, to take any hurt or hindrance by reason of my negligence, I knew the greatness of

the fault, and also the horrible punishment that would ensue.

More than fifty-seven years have passed away since that sermon was preached, and I still behold in the book of remembrance the whole of that scene as if it were of yesterday, and I am at times even yet similarly affected. My congregation in Cornwall was at first very small, and confined to the village and neighbourhood, consequently my clerical duties were so little burthensome as to leave me much leisure time. Thus situated, I was induced to listen to the solicitations of the parents of some of my pupils who had not finished their studies at Kingston to continue them at my new mission, and also to the urgent entreaties of many from Lower as well as Upper Canada, to admit their sons to the same privilege, because there was at that time no seminary in the country where the protestant youth could obtain a liberal education. I spent nine years very happily at Cornwall, my time was fully, and on the whole, usefully and pleasantly occupied. My congregation gradually increased, and the communicants multiplied year by year. I sought recreation occasionally from what I called missionary excursions. I considered my parish to extend as far as Brockville about sixty miles, and within this area I made from time to time, as my avocations admitted, appointments for Divine worship, and for the administration of the sacraments. These services were delightful to myself, and gratifying to the people scattered through the wilderness. Hundreds are still alive who were baptised at these appointments, and many a mother's heart was filled

with joy in beholding her child made a member of Christ, the child of God, and inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. In 1812 I was transferred to Toronto, then York. I left Cornwall with deep regret, yielding only to the conviction that it opened to me a larger field of usefulness. In my new parish my clerical duties were very much increased. But I still contrived for many years to keep up my missionary excursions through the distant settlements, and I can still find many of my baptised children in the Talbot settlement, the townships of Tecumseth and Penetanguishene, Orillia and Georgina, Port Hope, Cobourg, &c. The general progress of the Church during all this time was much slower than might have been expected. In 1803, we had only five clergymen in Upper Canada, and one Bishop for all Canada. In 1819 the clergy had only increased to 16, with two military chaplains. During the French revolutionary wars emigration was next to nothing, and they dropped in by single families. It was not till the American war of 1812, and after the peace of 1815, on the return of the troops to the mother country, that Canada became at all known, or that emigration began to commence in any strength from the United Kingdom of England and Ireland. It was indeed for many years very small and imperfect in arrangement, nor did it come in any greater strength till after 1831. Since then it has been at times somewhat fluctuating, but on the whole very large, and attended with a proportional increase of the clergy. In 1839 they numbered 61, and in 1857, just before the Bishopric of Huron was established, they reach-

ed 173, and at this time they are supposed to be rather more than two hundred, presided over by two Bishops, with the prospect of soon having a third. Looking at the progress of the Church through a vista of 60 years, I feel it most encouraging, and more especially because I can witness to its continued peace and moderation. The movements in the mother Church never to any extent disturbed our tranquillity, and scarcely reminded us that there were any differences any where within the Church, and if she continues to preserve the same prudence, peace and harmony, and a like activity of exertion, her future, under the Divine blessing, will be glorious. The language which I have used in favour of creeds and forms of prayer, and the great admiration in which I hold those of our Church, may be considered by some as too strong, but as I write from conviction and desire to speak the truth in soberness, I shall be easily pardoned by the wise and candid. It would, indeed, be impossible for me to find words more noble and impressive in their commendation than have been adopted by many who have yet continued dissenters. The Book of Common Prayer has for nearly three hundred years been invested in the eyes of our people with a sanctity and reverence second only to those which surround the Scriptures themselves. We are directed by the Sixth Article to look to the Word of God alone, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament for the only sure rule of faith and practice. They are composed of many distinct books, written by different authors in different ages, on various interesting subjects which engage

our attention as moral and religious beings. They make no attempt to prove the existence of a God, and of a future state, or of providence, prayer, and public worship, because they belong to what we call natural religion, and are universally admitted, and because they can be established by reason, and have found a place where no revelation was known to exist. Nevertheless all these articles of faith and practice are at the very foundation of Christianity, one of whose objects it is to explain them in all their bearings and tendencies in the characters and hopes of men, and thus bring to light many important facts and doctrines which eluded all the scrutinies of human reason. But without entering further into the distinction between natural and revealed religion, which I believe will gradually disappear as we advance in knowledge, I will merely observe that the most mysterious parts of the Gospel will be found essentially connected with the nature and government of God. Hence it is no mark of wisdom to despise the resources of human reason, and still less to slight the light of the revelation which can alone conduct our reason to just and profitable conclusions. Reason is the compass by which we steer our course, and revelation the polar star by which we correct its variations. The Scriptures, generally speaking, do not reason, but exhort and remonstrate. Nor do they attempt to fetter the judgment by the subtleties of argument, but to raise the feelings by appealing to plain matters of fact. Now this is what might have been expected from teachers acting under a commission, and armed by undeniable facts to enforce

their admonitions. But though there is no regular treatise in the Holy Scriptures on any one branch of religious doctrine, yet all the materials of a regular system are to be found there. The word of God contains the doctrines of religion, in the same way as the system of nature contains the elements of physical science. In both cases the doctrines are deduced from the facts which are not presented to us in any regular order, and must be classified before we can arrive at the first principles. Hence those who would teach natural religion with profit, must arrange the facts which it offers into a system. And they who would explain the ways of God must arrange the materials which are so amply furnished in the Bible, but which are presented apparently without plan or order.

I would therefore consider all objections to systems of divinity to be as unreasonable as it would be to object to the philosophy of Newton, for having elucidated the laws of nature, and arranged the phenomena of the heavens. The ways of God are very complicated, as we all feel, and the manifestations of His will so infinitely diversified as at times to appear opposed to each other. Hence it is only by an enlarged view of His providence, that we can see the beauties, and estimate the value, of that revelation which he has given us.

It is a great mistake to suppose that revelation has been given to save us the trouble of thinking. Its object is to teach us to think aright; to prevent the waste and misapplication of our faculties—but not to supersede their exercise. And though I am per-

suaded that no degree of study would ever have enabled man to arrive at accurate conceptions of God and of His government without the aid of revelation, I am no less certain, that revelation itself will not endue men with religious knowledge without study, meditation, and reflection. Hence the great head of the Church saw it necessary to ordain Apostles, Evangelists, and Teachers, to point out the leading doctrines of Holy Scripture, and to shew their bearing on the duties and the hopes of men.

Moreover, creeds, confessions, and articles, were from the first rendered necessary to obviate and explain the misrepresentations of enemies, and to rescue the Gospel from the opprobrium brought upon it by the sects and individuals professing Christianity. This gave rise to the apologies of the early fathers, which are neither more nor less than expositions of the Christian creed, as it affects the opinions and practice of those who receive it. In these circumstances the true followers of Christ found it their duty to give a detailed account of their faith, and the benefits which resulted from it. Hence, the same thing continues necessary, and will always continue so long as the enemies of Christianity seek to misrepresent it, or wicked men endeavour to make it a cloak of licentiousness.

If creeds and systems have been brought into disrespect, it has been caused by the dogmatism and intolerance of those who framed or adopted them, or by absurd attempts to explain what God has thought proper to conceal. In fine, the leading feature in Scripture instruction is to inculcate principles. We

are not presented with a tedious list of particular rules, which is the case in all other systems of religion, and which uniformly leads to narrow and contracted views of duty and debasing conceptions of the Divine Majesty. A few great principles are addressed to the heart, with an apparent indifference about minute details.

Thus the whole of our duty is resolved into love to God, and our neighbour, which the Apostle still further simplifies by telling us that love is the fulfilling of the whole law, intimating that if we sincerely love God it will operate effectually in producing cheerful and universal obedience. This being the grand principle of action, all the dispensations of God are calculated to produce and strengthen it by displaying his mercy and love to the human race.

We are commanded to love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul, and strength and mind, and that this may not appear a hard and unreasonable duty, the goodness of God is presented to us every day, and in a thousand different forms. We see that he is only calling on us to imitate his own perfections, and to make a becoming return of gratitude and love to the author of our lives, and of all our comforts.

FORMS OF PRAYER.

In regard to precomposed forms of prayer, it is frequently objected that they are not so fit for devotional purposes as unpremeditated supplications, and that the first Christians mentioned in Scripture

prayed extemporaneously. To this we reply, that forms of prayer were common among the Jews, that our Lord himself supplied his Disciples with a form of Prayer expressed in the plural number, and therefore intended for joint worship.

That forms of prayer were used in the primitive Church as far back as we have any accurate information, is manifest from ecclesiastical history. And this at least is sufficient to prove, that forms of prayer are not unlawful, and that the members of our Church may with safe consciences conform to her rule on the subject. It may further be observed that in these days we have not the gifts of the Spirit equal to those in the days of the Apostles, and that it is rash and presumptuous for us to pour out our own unpremeditated thoughts rather than to trust to a form carefully and wisely constructed by holy and wise men, in words which suit the general condition of worshippers. It is surely much safer and more reverential to depend upon its accuracy than to be exposed to the feelings, fancies, and infirmities of men, sometimes the most ignorant and infatuated, who utter in their prayers such extravagancies and follies as are shocking to all enlightened Christians, and highly offensive to the Saviour, whom they pretend to worship.

Let it also be remembered, that our Lord has given especial assurance of a gracious hearing to the joint prayer of those who shall agree together, touching something they shall ask in His name. Now, it is impossible for uninspired men to agree together in a prayer offered up by one of them, if they know

nothing of it beforehand, or have to learn what the prayer is, word by word as it is pronounced.

Let any one, with true devotion of heart, attend our Church for one Sunday, and follow the service with honest attention as it proceeds, and he will find it scriptural, spiritual, and practical. What part of the counsel of God which has been revealed for the salvation of man is not there to be found? Confession, prayer, intercession, the divinely instituted sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In truth, all that the most pious and best informed Christian can look for, whether in the way of his duty, or his occasional devotion, will be found in that treasure of religious services, the Common Prayer Book; arranged in the most beautiful order of succession, and expressed in such a solemn, devotional, lucid, and harmonious style of composition, as can hardly be paralleled. The objection as to reading the prayers arises generally from ignorance or coldness; for a man may deliver a prayer, when the words are printed before him, as if they came from his own inspired imagination, or were the sole dictates of his own devotion.

The abuses of praying extemporaneously were so many, that I shall only notice one as a fair specimen. The parting command of our Lord to His people was that they should love one another; and there can be no more natural expression of their mutual love than intercession for each other at the throne of their common father. Intercessory prayer, therefore, forms a common part of the public devotions of the Church. Yet, when an indiscreet man arises

publicly to ask God to forgive other people's sins, there is great danger lest his prayer degenerate into oblique invective, to confute or annoy those who differ from him in opinion, or sink into the Pharisee's prayer: God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men. Surely, then, we are justified in preferring written forms to extemporaneous prayer, and indeed, written forms have been and will often be found to be essential to the continuance of the true faith.

The principles of Calvin, once thought so precious in Geneva, were replaced by Socinianism; the same thing happened with some of the Irish and English and American Presbyterians and Congregationalists, after they had unfortunately dispensed with written forms of prayer. Now, it is evident that no such results could have happened had such written forms been retained. A member of our Church cannot keep back the leading doctrines of the Gospel. He may indeed leave them out in his sermons, dropping them one by one. But they still remain in the prayers, and his unfaithfulness may be cured by the truthfulness and energy of a conscientious successor.

MY BRETHREN,

As an integral portion of the United Church of England and Ireland, we are deeply interested in any proceeding that may either directly or indirectly touch upon her purity, and influence for good. Under this impression I feel it my duty to allude to the alteration which has already been made at home in the law of marriage, and to the attempts that are

making to legalize marriage with a deceased wife's sister. You are aware that a law of divorce has been passed in England, contrary to the strenuous opposition of the Church, and is now in operation. But, perhaps, you are not equally aware that the evils of its working are already so manifest as to alarm its promoters, and fill them with apprehension as to its future results. I trust what they have done in England, and threaten yet to do, will not be lost upon us, and that we shall resist to the utmost any attempt to legalize incestuous connexions in any form or shape. That this is no empty or useless warning is sufficiently evident from what took place on this important matter during the last session of the Provincial Parliament, when a bill was introduced by the Honourable James Morris, to legalize marriage with a deceased wife's sister. It was strenuously opposed by the Honourable P. B. DeBlaquière, and other churchmen in the house, and when it was contemplated to confine its operation to Upper Canada, it was very properly contended that the House was called upon to legislate for the whole province, and as the Lower Canadians disapproved of the principles of the bill, they would oppose it; and it was thrown out. Immediately, on hearing of the impending danger, it was my duty to petition with my Clergy against the bill, denouncing the wickedness of the proposed enactment, and praying that it might not pass. The Church is under great obligation to the Honourable P. B. DeBlaquière, and his friends, for their prompt and successful action in this case: yet we must not sleep, but continue on

the watch, for we know not how soon the enemy may be again at work.

The law of the Church of England, which is the law of Christ, is, that marriage is indissoluble, and on this foundation the law of marriage, which is the oldest, the greatest, and most universal of all social institutions, has ever rested in England. It was thus settled at the Reformation, on the basis of Holy Scripture, and the just restraints by which it is guarded, appear to have been in harmony with the entire sense of the public almost to the present time. Indeed the legislation of our forefathers on marriage was intended not to impair, but to restore and brighten up, and heighten the fences which protect this most solemn and holy contract. Marriages were celebrated before God, and by his authority, they were even exalted to be a figure of the indissoluble union betwixt Christ and his universal church.

It is therefore a life of long engagement, which, when lawfully contracted, never can be rightfully dissolved so as to set the parties free during their joint lives to unite with other persons. In this way the happiness of the married life is secured by its indissolubility—it softens the temper, it teaches mutual concession—knowing that they cannot get free, they cultivate the kinder feelings and affections which at first brought them together, and become good husbands and wives—for necessity is a powerful master in teaching the duties it imposes. The well-being of every family and nation depends on the permanence of the nuptial covenant, and in-

creases or diminishes in proportion as this certainty is tampered with or infringed. Christian marriage has wrought the most precious and momentous changes in the character and position of woman, and effected one of the noblest and most glorious achievements of the Gospel, for it has elevated the ministering angel of the world to perfect equality with man in all that relates to personal and spiritual being. The married pair, by cherishing the love and affection which reigned during their courtships, give free course to the kindest emotions and affections of their hearts—they feel that God blesses the daily intercourse of domestic life, by making the love and affection which bind parents and children, brothers and sisters, and friends and relations dwelling in the same house and participating in the common interests and enjoyments, the source of the purest happiness—and such love and affection become more intense in their indulgence, and are the very last to be eradicated from the human heart. What disquietude may not be effaced from the mind of a man who can at any time find a resting place amidst the endearing affections of his own home. And, on the other hand, how worthless rank, station, or riches, or the highest prosperity, to him who finds no pleasure in the bosom of his family!

With respect to the revision of the Prayer Book, which has for some time past agitated the mother Church, and in which we are as deeply interested as our brethren in England, I rejoice to inform you that the question has been fully debated and decided against its promoters. If they had mere-

ly asked for the change of obsolete words and expressions, if any such there be, and a simplification of some of the Rubrics, which seem to conflict, or some improved arrangement of the services, they might have received some countenance. But this was not their object, they aimed at the most important doctrinal changes, attempting, for instance, by an unscriptural and delusive theory to reduce the doctrine of Holy Baptism to an empty form. Thus placing our Church in the dilemma of having no doctrine at all respecting Holy Baptism, &c. The members of our Church generally, both lay and clerical, feel that possessing such a treasure of truth as we have in the Book of Common Prayer, and which, amidst our minor differences, presents such a band of union, and also knowing what lively affection is felt by rich and poor, young and old, learned and unlearned, for that inestimable inheritance which we have received from our forefathers in the faith, we should, in attempting to improve it, be running the most fearful risk, altogether disproportionate to any advantage that can possibly be obtained.

Let us, then, my brethren, cleave to the Book of Common Prayer, and steadfastly refuse to favour any proposals for change in the silly hope that we may remove some trifling inconveniences, and still preserve for it all our reverence and love. If we once begin to change where shall we stop? I foresee an aggravation of difficulties arising as well as an increase of irritation, and eventually the disruption of the Church of England. The debate was conducted with much courtesy and candour, although

it presented only a small section of the Church contending for changes which, if adopted, would in a short time have accomplished her total destruction. And it gives a noble specimen of the forbearing dignity of the House of Lords, that a measure involving objects of such inestimable value to millions should be discussed with good temper and calm moderation. When the agitation for the revision of the Prayer Book first commenced, it seemed to be the desire of its friends to limit themselves to a mere abridgement of the length of the service and avoidance of repetitions ; but when its noble mover brought up the petition in the House of Lords for consideration, it appeared that he would be content with nothing less than an undefined doctrinal alteration of all our formularies. Is it, then, to be wondered at, that not a single member of the Episcopal Bench supported the motion, and that the non-concurrence of the Clergy was proved by the fact, that ten thousand had signed a declaration against it? The Archbishop of Canterbury, with that mildness for which he has always been conspicuous, opposed the motion in behalf of the Right Reverend Bench. His Grace said, that admitting the possibility of minor alterations, which might be improvements, still, what some thought blemishes others thought beauties, and it was not worth while to subject their admirable Liturgy to the discussions and controversies, not to say dissensions, which the passage of any changes must necessarily give rise to. Without noticing any other speeches it may be sufficient to remark, that they were all in opposition to the pro-

ceeding, and the motion was negatived without a division.

It was justly observed as a grave objection, that there was no such thing as a Convocation representing the United Church of England and Ireland, and therefore that changes introduced by any minor authority would not be binding. It is, however, pleasing to remark that some steps have already been taken towards the establishment of such a tribunal, and although the progress to its final establishment may be slow, yet from what has been done by the present Convocation, under its weakness and deficiencies it has exhibited something of life and vitality ; and with proper alterations and judicious modifications of its ancient constitution, so as to meet the improved knowledge and civilization of the present times, it might, without much difficulty, be placed in working order. The assembly of such Convocation, representing the United Church of England and Ireland, would offer a splendid spectacle, and if occasional access, in the way of deputation, from our Colonies and the Church of the United States, were encouraged, it would present the most august Church Legislature that the Christian world has ever yet beheld ; and although much will require to be done, before this sublime Convocation can be brought to bear, yet there are no insurmountable obstacles in the way.

Having, my Brethren, detained you, I fear, much too long, I have now to thank you for your patient forbearance and attention. Be assured, the more loyal we are to our Church, and the more our

spiritual being is fashioned by her rules and teaching, the more fervent and true will be our love to God ; and as it is our duty to fix in the souls of those we teach reverence for all law and order, so let us endeavour to keep our own ministrations up to its requirements.

Above all things, never falter in your faith. If your labours of love seem at times fruitless, be not cast down ; for it is your office to spend and be spent in your Master's service ; the result is with Him, and not with you, and He Himself tells us, that many be called but few chosen.

And now I bid you God speed, and bless you in the name of the Lord : I trust that I have never knowingly failed to appreciate your labours in your profession, or your constant kindness and sympathy towards myself ; nor in my intercourse with you have I omitted the expression of those cordial and grateful feelings of my heart towards you by which I have been animated.

Of myself, I can only say, that my great object has ever been to discharge the duties of my office quietly and impartially. I have never desired to clog or impede your exertions, but to second and sustain them, so far as my abilities and opportunities would permit. Having, myself, deep-rooted convictions about what is the true teaching of the Church, I may not at all times have enjoyed the unsuspecting confidence of every one of my Clergy ; but I can truly say that I have deserved it ; whilst I have on all occasions been anxious to give a liberal construction to slighter divergencies from what I

believe to be the path in which the Church would guide her clergy, and to guard against making them wider through my own personal faults of disposition.

I have always been aware, that the best endeavours I could make to promote unity in the Church, was to seek after inward unity and peace in my own breast, because it is only by cherishing such graces that I can give consistency to my religious character, and cause its influence to pervade and penetrate the diocese, and shed abroad in it the power of faith and charity.
